

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

Memorandum

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TO : EUR - Mr. Foy D. Kohler
THRU : EUR - Mr. Richard H. Davis
FROM : SOV - John C. Guthrie

SUBJECT: Comparison of Soviet Aide Memoire on Berlin, the Khrushchev Speech, and the Ulbricht Interview

Pursuant to your recent oral request, we informally asked INR/RSB to prepare a comparison of the three recent sets of statements listed above. A copy of the INR/RSB analysis is attached. Briefly stated, that analysis found:

1. The aide memoire appears to be intended as a basis for negotiations.
2. The Ulbricht interviews seem to have served as the channel for making it clear the final stage of the 1959 Foreign Ministers talks could well be a good starting point for new negotiations on Berlin.
3. Khrushchev's speech appears to have been intended primarily to set the propaganda tone for a new round on Berlin and Germany; it is a statement of Soviet aims, offers no conciliatory approach, and justifies the maximum Soviet position.

Although the INR/RSB study does not directly answer the question whether the Khrushchev speech reveals something of a softening of the position taken in the aide memoire, it clearly implies and we concur that, if anything, the speech is "tougher" in that it is more explicit regarding the time limit for a "peaceful settlement."

We also feel that the study comes down a bit too heavily on the conclusion that the aide memoire was designed essentially as a basis for negotiation. In our view, the three sets of recent statements have a close mutual relationship with differences stemming primarily from the circumstances under which each set was released. Certainly all three were drafted for publication and all three attempt to justify the maximum Soviet position while conveying a clear message of urgency. One significant point which emerges clearly in all three is the firm insistence on the "two German states" thesis and on bringing about a new situation in which the Western powers must face up to some degree of acceptance of the "DDR."

Later: In view of the blunt statement in Khrushchev's speech yesterday that the Soviet Union "will at the end of this year sign a peace treaty with the GDR," we consider the above conclusions still more firmly valid.

cc: GER - Mr. Cash
SOV: WCanderson:jcd

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Memorandum

TO : EUR/BOV - Mr. Guthrie

DATE: June 20, 1961

FROM : INR/RSB - John Kappel JK

SUBJECT: Comparison of Soviet Aide Memoire on Berlin, the Khrushchev Speech and the Ulbricht Interviews.

The following is submitted with reference to Jack Armitage's telephone conversation with me yesterday regarding Mr. Kohler's desire for an analysis on the above subject.

Of the three statements of positions in question, the aide memoire would appear to be intended to set forth an initial negotiating position on the German-Berlin problem. The Ulbricht interviews of June 13 and 15 (which took place before the Khrushchev speech) support this view in that Ulbricht specifically mentioned the desire to place negotiations on the Germany-Berlin problem on a foreign ministers level, continuing where Geneva 1959 left off. Khrushchev's speech, taken as a whole, only seems intended to provide the propaganda setting and emphasize the urgency of the situation; it is, thus, more rigid in substance than the aide memoire.

Aide Memoire. That the aide memoire appears to be intended as a basis for negotiations can be argued from two facts: its phraseology is non-categorical in committing the USSR to any specific course of action or final time limits; and its proposal for an interim arrangement on Berlin differs somewhat from the last such Soviet interim proposal (May 9, 1960) and is susceptible to flexible manipulation. The Khrushchev speech, on the other hand, combined threats, time limits and flat statements of the maximum Soviet position in what is basically a polemic, not a negotiating position.

(a) Two statements in the aide memoire in particular appear to be open invitations for countersuggestions: "At present, the Soviet government sees no better solution of the problem of West Berlin than its transformation into a demilitarized free city" and "The Soviet government is ready to examine any constructive proposal by the US government on a German peace treaty and normalization of the situation in West Berlin". In contrast, Khrushchev presents the maximum Soviet position on a two Germanies peace treaty and (on this basis) a West Berlin "free city" without any reference to a willingness to entertain other proposals.

(b) The aide memoire six months time limit for the interim period is left deliberately vague as to starting date; it is portrayed as

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a proposal which, ipso facto, is subject to rejection, approval or modification in the course of negotiations. Khrushchev says flatly that a settlement must come by the end of the year.

(c) While the interim agreement set forth in the aide memoire is clearly unacceptable to the West in its present form, it leaves room for considerable flexibility in the Soviet negotiating position. For example, the Soviets could use this proposal as a bargaining counter by holding fast to it and then offering, as an alternative, less onerous interim agreement providing for arrangements on Berlin. Or, the Soviets could modify the proposal itself by (1) lengthening the period of the interim talks, (2) leaving open the question of what happens after the interim period lapses, or (3) combining the all-German talks with a four-power commission to examine the German question.

Thus, while there is no basic change in the Soviet position as far as aims are concerned, the aide memoire appears to be intended to convey negotiating possibilities. Its formulation seems carefully designed not to exclude possibilities of modification.

Ulbricht Interview

Walter Ulbricht appears to have been delegated the role of making it clear that the final stage of the 1959 Geneva talks could well be considered a good starting point for new negotiations on Berlin. His June 15 press conference (and the June 13 Hearst interview) deliberately floated the idea of foreign minister level negotiations. He also referred specifically to the allegedly near agreement at Geneva on 4-power control of West Berlin, elimination of subversive activities and agreement with the GDR on access questions and stated that "satisfactory results can be achieved if the negotiations are now continued in a serious and business-like manner".

Khrushchev Speech

In comparison with the aide memoire, Khrushchev's speech appears to be intended primarily to set the propaganda tone for a pending round on Germany and Berlin. It is basically a statement of Soviet aims, offers no conciliatory approach and its tenor is one of providing justification for the maximum Soviet position. His presentation conspicuously avoids details of the proposed peace treaty with Germany or the free city arrangement for Berlin; he appears more interested in conjuring up fears of the consequences of opposing Soviet aims than in spelling out exactly what he proposes. His time limit -- by the end of this year -- is far more

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categorical than the aide memoire's reference to a six month interim with unspecified beginning. Any feeling that his speech was relatively "softer" than the aide memoire in regard to the Berlin and German questions could only stem from its greater length with the weight of words softening the impact of its contents.

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cc: INR - Mr. Evans

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